



JAMES V. "CAPT'N JIM" MCMAHAN COMMISSION ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Meeting Minutes

From

August 4, 2022

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Robert Brown at 6:34 PM.

Attending: Bob Brown, Hayden Anthony, Simon Ballard, Lisa Brown, Jennifer Button, Art Kaff, Scott Kearby, Dennis Miller, Bill Montgomery, Denise Perry, Deacon Vic Petrosino, Pam Silcox, Ryan Koch (representative for Councilman Johnson)

Excused: Mike Ray, Barbara Travers

Guests: CPT Beltran for COL Casiano (APG Garrison Commander), Quinten Johnson (APG PAO)

Pledge of Allegiance led by Robert Brown

Opening Prayer led by Deacon Vic Petrosino

Welcome & Opening Comments:

Chairman Brown – presented the HCCOVA Mission and Vision statements and welcomed members.

Mission: *To advocate for our veterans and their families and connect them to resources through outreach and education.*

Vision: *A Harford County community that is responsive to the needs of Veterans and their families.*

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Minutes from the June 2, 2022, meeting was approved. Dennis Miller made motion to approve, Pam Silcox seconded the motion. Ryan Koch will post the minutes and agenda to the website.

GUEST SPEAKERS: None

OLD BUSINESS:

- Veterans Employment Stand down - Perry Point VAMHCS July 14th
 - Many different organizations were present to offer employment & services to veterans of Harford County & Cecil County, including resume services & job bank
 - Maryland DLLR (Department of Labor, Licensing & Regulation) representatives assist 100's of veterans find jobs (POC: Jorge Cruz)
- Veterans Resource Fair, November 12, 2022 – Bel Air Armory
 - Sent a 'save the date' notice to all vendors that participated or expressed interest in last year's fair
 - Hayden working on facility coordination, including insurance & health dept requirements
 - Resource Fair Committee meeting following the commission meeting tonight

- Veterans Claims Clinic, September 7, 2022 – Harford Community College
 - Clinic focus on just claims (& sign-up for VA health care)
 - Scheduled from 9am to 3pm (by appointment only)
 - Run by Chesapeake Veterans Alliance & Maryland VA/VAMHCS
 - Representatives will take veteran from whatever stage they are in the claims process & provide assistance
 - Harford County is only the 2nd county to date selected to host clinic
 - No support needed except meals for workers (county will provide)
 - Flyers sent out today
- 4th of July Parade – Bel Air
 - Bob thanked fellow commission members (Art, Bill, Denise, Dennis, Hayden & Lisa) for marching in the parade
- HCCOVA Annual Report
 - Bob presented the commission's annual report to the Harford County Council members
 - Report provides a synopsis of commission activities, initiatives, and support provided to Harford County veterans
 - Report is available on the commission website
- Veterans Collaborative July 12th
 - Speakers: Jorge Cruz and Susquehanna Workforce representative
 - Topic: veteran employment & employment services
 - Topic for next collaborative: mental health

NEW BUSINESS

- Legislative Issues
 - VA Maryland State and Federal Update (2nd COVID booster information, garage closure, Crisis Line change to 988 (then option 1 for veterans), coordinated care & integrated case management)
 - VA Caregiver support
 - Originally program only applied to caring for veterans serving after 9/11; but will now apply to all veterans with 70% or more disability rating
 - 90-day application process
- Legal Updates
 - PACT Act passed
 - Expanded healthcare benefits for service members exposed to burn pits, agent orange & other hazardous environments
 - Volunteer has come forward to provide legal help to veterans
- Programs and Outreach
 - VAMHCS VSO Congressional Stakeholder Information
 - VA Medical Center – Perry Point Giving Opportunities
 - Looking for bodywash, razors, books, coffee, undergarments, etc....
 - County has donated items resulting from donation drives in the past
 - Jen asked for information for HCPL to consider donation drive
- Assistance requests received during the past month
 - Several requests received & addressed by commission members, including claims submission, requests for information on resource fair

- Public Events and Recognition
 - Veterans Collaborative – held quarterly (virtual meeting)
 - Open to all veterans and their families
 - Next meeting: October 11th from 1:00 – 2:30 pm: “Combating Substance Misuse Impacting Maryland’s Veterans, Service Members and their Families”
 - Project Opportunity
 - Free 10-week entrepreneur training for veterans &/or military spouses
 - Next session: Orientation - August 17th; first class - September 7th
 - Current registration is low
 - Requesting help to advertise
 - Jen will forward to Chamber of Commerce
 - Classes to held at Swan Creek Bldg, Havre de Grace
 - Cyber Workforce Academy
 - Free training program held 1x/year (funded by grants)
 - Program to train people to fill gaps in cybersecurity jobs

MEMBER UPDATES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Councilman Andre Johnson- Committee Liaison/ Commission Coordinator
 - Property Tax credit
 - Current requirement is property value less than \$400k
 - Looking into legislation to change to \$500k
- Hayden Anthony (Vice Chair)
 - APG virtual hiring event: August 1st-26th
- Simon Ballard
 - Community services sponsoring crisis services
 - Training for service providers on suicide prevention, military culture, and crisis training
 - Next training: September 8th
 - Camp LeJeune water court claim
 - Suggest go to VSO to determine if damages
 - Discussion on if former dependent can receive help from VSO’s
- Jennifer Button
 - MOAA Poster & Essay Contest
 - Poster & essay contest for school aged students (HCPS, private, home-school)
 - Theme: “What sacrifices do members of the military, Veterans and their families make for our country?”
 - Winners will be recognized at the Veterans Resource Fair on November 12th
- Arthur Kaff
 - Facebook
 - Quinten Johnson assisting with posts
 - Posted job opportunities
 - Discussion on posting for donations.
 - Library post or not? Further discussion required

- William Montgomery
 - Attended monthly pre-retirement brief at APG
 - APG Retiree Council
 - looking at feedback on Retiree Appreciation Day event (May 2022)
 - looking for more engagement opportunities throughout the year
- Dennis Miller
 - Attended Baltimore military muster in June and plans on attending the next one, scheduled for August 9th
- Denise Perry
 - Passage of House Bill 167 – Commission to Establish a Maryland Women Veterans Memorial
 - Denise was asked to serve this commission
- Vic Petrosino (Chaplain)
 - Continue to serve veterans at Upper Chesapeake Hospital
 - At least 25 chaplains serve at both hospitals

FINAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Next meeting is scheduled for September 1, 2022 at 6:30 PM. Information will be presented with the agenda on any specific meeting requirements.
- Meetings are scheduled for the first Thursday of the month unless otherwise announced. The meeting was adjourned at 7:33 pm.